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FIRST COMMITTEE
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Monday, 4 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Ordonez (Philippines)
(Vice-Chairman)

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- Consideration of and action on all disarmament agenda items (continued)

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13 November 1991

ENGLISH

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ordonez (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to the second phase of its work. As members were informed, this morning's meeting as well as those scheduled from 5 to 7 November have been set aside for the introduction of and comments on draft resolutions.

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): At last year's session of the Committee, Sweden circulated, in document A/C.1/45/8/Rev.1, a memorandum on naval armaments and disarmament. It was stated in the memorandum that every fourth nuclear weapon in the world, or a total of about 15,000, was earmarked for deployment at sea. Approximately one third, or about 5,000, of all sea-based nuclear weapons could be estimated to belong to the category "sub-strategic", comprising a variety of nuclear weapons intended for targets at sea, as well as nuclear-armed cruise missiles and other nuclear arms for attacks against targets on land. In the memorandum, Sweden proposed negotiations on the prohibition of non-strategic nuclear weapons at sea.

As is well-known, since then facts and figures have changed, or are about to change, substantially. We have been able to welcome the historic Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Soviet Union containing a commitment to reduce substantially the number of strategic nuclear weapons and, in many respects, constituting a turning point in world disarmament efforts. In the last few weeks we have also seen initiatives directed specifically at naval nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The unilateral measures recently announced by the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union comprise a total withdrawal of all their naval sub-strategic nuclear weapons. These are decisive and much appreciated steps in naval disarmament. After they have been implemented, all the 5,000 sub-strategic nuclear weapons will have disappeared from the high seas.

Over the years Sweden has many times called for an end to the policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board any particular ships at any particular time. As we interpret them, the declarations by United States defence officials in connection with the recently announced unilateral measures indicate that, as soon as United States nuclear weapons have been withdrawn, this policy will no longer be relevant to surface ships and attack submarines. In practice, it will thus not be applied any more. We fervently hope that all the nuclear Powers will act in the same manner. Such a change of policy would contribute to openness and transparency in naval matters and would in itself be a confidence-building measure of great significance.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

As encouraging as these latest developments may be, let me however note that much remains to be done in the maritime domain. Confidence could be further strengthened, not least through a multilateral regime for the prevention of incidents at sea, building on the positive experience of existing bilateral agreements.

As has been stressed by Sweden in many forums, the laws of sea warfare are also in urgent need of modernization. I will return to this subject under the agenda item regarding excessively injurious conventional weapons.

The year 1991 has been a memorable one for disarmament, giving hope and encouragement for years to come. Let me conclude by emphasizing that this now holds true also for the state of affairs in the field of naval disarmament.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): I would like to address agenda items 51 and 53. I have the honour to introduce into the First Committee, under those two items, a draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", which is to be found in document A/C.1/46/L.4.

For nearly 20 years New Zealand, alternating with Australia, has submitted a draft resolution in this Committee on nuclear testing. Mexico has done likewise, and every year both draft resolutions have been adopted by overwhelming majorites. Initially, each draft resolution reflected the rather different perspectives of its group of sponsors. In recent years, those differences have become less and less clear-cut, but the shared objective has always been the same: cessation of nuclear testing.

New Zealand and Australia as main sponsors of one of the traditional texts and Mexico as main sponsor of the other attempted last year to present the Committee with a single text. We did so in the belief that the time had come for the First Committee to demonstrate as far as possible its willingness

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

to approach this important subject on a common basis. Our efforts were, of course, also consistent with our aim of rationalizing the Committee's work. It was a matter of regret that those efforts were not successful in 1990.

But we did not give up. Over the past 12 months we have seen a series of positive developments in the international disarmament and security situation, developments which were widely commended during the general debate held over the last three weeks. Amongst other things I refer, of course, to the ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions, the agreement on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and, most recently, the announcements by the United States and the Soviet Union on tactical nuclear weaponry.

Against that background, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico and other interested delegations, notably Japan, Sweden, Canada and Norway, were encouraged again to embark on a course of negotiations this year to draft a single draft resolution on a nuclear-test ban, one which would secure the support of most, if not all, of the international community. I am extremely pleased to place the results of those negotiations before the Committee in document A/C.1/46/L.4.

The draft resolution is sponsored by the 42 States which last year sponsored either the Australia-New Zealand or the Mexican draft resolution. Their names head document A/C.1/46/L.4, and I will not read out the long list. But I want to assure each and every one of the States listed there of our deep appreciation of their support. It demonstrates the importance which States Members of the United Nations accord to a nuclear-test ban. I might add that since submitting the text we have had requests from other States also wishing to sponsor the draft resolution, and I would encourage any delegation

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

so interested to contact the Secretariat and add its name to the list of sponsors.

The sponsors of this draft resolution are convinced that an end to nuclear testing by all States in all environments for all time is an essential step towards preventing the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapons. It would also contribute, along with other concurrent efforts to reduce nuclear arms, to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would welcome the recent positive developments to which I referred a moment ago. Amongst those is the long-awaited ratification of two important bilateral treaties, the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions. But as draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.4 makes clear, we consider that the most effective way to bring about a cessation of nuclear testing is through a multilateral treaty that would attract the adherence of all States. The Conference on Disarmament has a particular responsibility in that regard, a responsibility spelled out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of our draft resolution. Paragraph 5 sets out our views on the work the Conference on Disarmament and its Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts should undertake in addressing the verification requirements of a test-ban treaty.

For the first time in many years, the First Committee has the opportunity to speak with one voice on the subject of a nuclear-test ban. Draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.4 represents a very real effort by all concerned to promote a practical, positive approach to this often emotionally-charged subject. I would particularly like to salute the efforts of Ambassador Miguel Marin Bosch of Mexico and Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia and their delegations in enabling us to place this text before the Committee today. Together we commend it to all member States.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The cessation of all nuclear testing is among the main disarmament goals of the United Nations. Along with the overwhelming majority of other Member States, Mexico has insisted on the urgent need to put an end to such tests once and fo- all. This is a measure the priority of which has been recognized repeatedly by the General Assembly and by the Secretary-General.

More than 30 years ago the international community stated that a complete halt to testing was the key to stemming the qualitative nuclear-arms race. Every year since 1957 the General Assembly has spoken out on this issue.

The commitments undertaken in the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty and reiterated in the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concerning the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty have come to naught. For three decades there have been unsuccessful bilateral and trilateral negotiations.

The Conference on Disarmament too has failed in its attempts. Some have argued against a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty; they have claimed that testing is essential to enhance the safety of nuclear-weapon design and to maintain the credibility of the nuclear deterrent, and that the lack of sufficient verification would make it possible to gain a military advantage.

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

The independent scientific community demonstrated, however, that the problem of verification could be resolved appropriately and that the only purpose for which tests were essential was to develop new types of nuclear weapons.

At the present time, with the disappearance of ideological rivalry and military rivalry on the part of the super-Powers and their allies, arguments against a comprehensive test-ban treaty lose all meaning. Furthermore, in a completely changed international atmosphere, the main military Powers have begun to question their military doctrines and the need to maintain the level and diversity of their arsenals. Why should they continue to test nuclear weapons in order to modernize arsenals if they wish to reduce them radically with a view to their elimination?

We welcome the recent unilateral initiatives in the field of nuclear disarmament, and we welcome particularly the decision of the Soviet Union to suspend its nuclear testing for one year. We are perhaps witnessing the beginning of what may be a reversal of the nuclear-arms race. We appeal to the main nuclear Powers to intensify their bilateral consultations on this subject and to promote multilateral negotiations.

Almost daily the international press takes note of the timeliness of the subject of a nuclear-weapon-test ban. It is a matter of constant debate. A comprehensive test-ban treaty is attainable precisely at this time when relations between the nuclear Powers have moved from confrontation to cooperation. Technological and scientific advances in the field of verification now offer solutions to the obstacles that used to be invoked, if we have the necessary political will.

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

The cessation of nuclear testing continues to be the starting-point for successful nuclear non-proliferation. If no progress is made in this field, the very future of the current non-proliferation regime might be jeopardized. We have two possible courses of action to achieve our objective, both of them viable and undoubtedly complementary. The first of them would be to amend the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963 in order to convert it into a comprehensive ban. This process is now being carried out in the Amendment Conference which, under the leadership of Minister Ali Alatas of Indonesia, began its substantive work in January of this year, and we hope that progress will be made in this respect.

The other possibility would be the beginning - the beginning, I repeat - of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. The Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban was re-established, with certain expectations, at the beginning of 1991. In spite of the imaginative approach and the endeavours of its Chairman, Ambassador Chadha of India, it only managed to put forward the same positions as everyone already knows. The debate was interesting, but in the last analysis it was the same debate as always; it was business as usual.

Years and even decades after the end of the Second World War, some men appeared who had been lost in the forest of certain Pacific islands. They were soldiers who were not aware that the war had ended. Something similar is now happening in Geneva. In the Palais de Nations there seem to be representatives who have not yet been informed of the end of the cold war. The thick walls of the Council Chamber perhaps serves as a fortress for certain outdated military doctrines.

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

For many years now the delegation of Mexico, together with other delegations, has been submitting in the First Committee a draft resolution on the subject of the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests, a draft which the General Assembly has invariably approved by an overwhelming majority. The Assembly has also been approving, with a similar vote, another draft resolution on the urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

This latter draft has been sponsored by another group of countries headed by Australia and New Zealand. Given the similarities and the content of the two resolutions in 1989, the delegations of Australia, New Zealand and Mexico, supported by the respective co-sponsors, decided to attempt to merge their respective texts. That merging, which was almost achieved last year, was introduced just a few moments ago by Ambassador Terence O'Brien of New Zealand. My delegation is pleased at the text which we have developed together, and which is contained in document A/C.1/46/L.4. We wish to state here our appreciation for the efforts made by the delegations of New Zealand and Australia, and by all of the other sponsors.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): On behalf of the Australian Government I am very pleased to support the comments by my New Zealand and Mexican colleagues in commending the text of the draft resolution on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The successful merger of two earlier similar but competing resolutions is on substantive grounds and on procedural grounds. Substantively, it gives a clear framework for the expression of the international community's views on testing issues. Procedurally, it helps rationalize this Committee's work.

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

We clearly recognize that there are differing views on the issues raised by nuclear testing, but those differences need to be managed in a satisfactory way in accordance with the ordinary working methods of this Committee. Australia believes the merged text offers such a framework, for the nuclear-weapon States also. We look forward to a high level of support for this draft resolution.

Finally, may I take the opportunity of thanking in particular the efforts of my New Zealand and Mexican colleagues as well as my friends from the other core group countries: Canada, Japan, Norway and Sweden. In Geneva and in New York, these countries have cooperated closely and, we believe, very effectively with a useful result.

Mr. AALBU (Norway): Norway has traditionally been co-sponsoring a draft resolution put forward by Australia and New Zealand on the urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We highly appreciate the fact that it has been possible this year to have just one draft resolution on this question covering agenda items 51 and 53. We are happy to co-sponsor this merged draft resolution.

As we said in our statement in plenary, the achievement of a total and permanent ban on all nuclear testing remains an important Norwegian disarmament objective. A comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is absolutely necessary in order to prevent the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapons and their further proliferation, and to contribute to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. Our concern about environmental and health risks associated with nuclear testing is an additional argument for discontinuing such testing.

(Mr. Aalbu, Norway)

We share the view expressed in the draft resolution that the most effective way to achieve an end to nuclear testing is through the conclusion, at an early date, of a comprehensive, verifiable nuclear-test-ban treaty that will attract the adherence of all States. In this regard we greatly appreciate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban established by the Conference on Disarmament.

We also attach great importance to, and we take an active part in, the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts and their GS/ETT-2 experiment, the result of which will now be analysed and evaluated before the Group's next meeting early next year. A global network for the exchange of seismic data must serve as the most important basis for a future system of verification of a test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Aalbu, Norway)

Careful thought should now be given to the question how the work of the Group and the results of the global experiment could be used as a basis for a treaty-verification system.

The Conference on Disarmament has particular responsibilities in the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We would like to see the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban in 1992, with an appropriate mandate as spelled out in this year's draft resolution.

It is our hope that the wide-ranging proposals made by the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union with regard to strategic nuclear arms would have a positive impact on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. Norway will, for its part, continue to support the work of the Conference on Disarmament in this field.

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): I should like to express the strong support of the Swedish delegation for draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.4, "Comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", which was introduced just now by the Ambassador of New Zealand.

Sweden has consistently over the years called for multilateral action on the test-ban issue. That position has been manifested by its co-sponsoring of the two traditional draft resolutions on the subject. Sweden's support for two separate draft resolutions emanated from a pragmatic attitude as to the formulation of a mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament in addressing the issue.

In our view, what matters is that substantive work on a nuclear-test-ban treaty be carried out so that the overall goal of a treaty can be effectively promoted and, when political conditions so allow, negotiations can lead to quick results. We hope that negotiations on a treaty can start without further delay.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

Sweden is very pleased that the efforts initiated last year to arrive at a merged text on the test-ban issue have this year resulted in one joint draft resolution. This has been possible owing to considerable flexibility on both sides, and the result is, in the view of my delegation, very satisfactory. Furthermore, the draft resolution would, as pointed out by the representative of New Zealand, at long last allow the First Committee and the General Assembly to speak with one voice on this important item, sending even stronger political signals from this authoritative body. It is encouraging that the draft text has already received as many as 42 sponsors.

In July this year Sweden submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a revised draft proposal for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The text contains updated sections with regard to verification of a test-ban treaty as well as provisions on organizational aspects. My delegation hopes that that draft will be given careful consideration by the Conference on Disarmament and will facilitate the work on this highly topical nuclear item.

My delegation joins the delegation of New Zealand in commending this draft resolution for wide support by the members of the First Committee.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

A/C.1/
46/PV.
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UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
26th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 5 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Ordonez (Philippines)
(Vice-Chairman)

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- Consideration of and action on all disarmament agenda items (continued)

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14 November 1991

ENGLISH

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ordonez (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of the Netherlands, who will introduce a draft resolution on behalf of the members of the European Economic Community.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): The Twelve believe that the adoption of regional arms control and disarmament measures is one of the most effective ways for States to contribute to the general arms control and disarmament process. This view was expressed by the representative of the European Community and its member States a year ago in this forum.

At that time a very serious crisis in the Gulf region was causing grave concern, but it also led the international community to give appropriate responses through the United Nations.

The consequences of that crisis can still be felt, of course through the great loss of life and immense material and environmental damage inflicted on Kuwait, but also through the continuous suffering of the Iraqi people under a brutal dictatorship, and, last but not least, through the fact that the international community needs to be reassured that Iraq will not again resort to such aggression in the future.

The recent events in the Gulf region have underlined the importance of regional disarmament and have justified the search for a balanced and comprehensive control of armaments in the region, notably through a dialogue among the States of that region. In this context the work of the Special

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Commission set up under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) has particular importance. When it has been fully carried out, this resolution should promote the conclusion of regional disarmament arrangements, especially by contributing to the objective of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for their delivery. In addition, the implementation of this resolution will contribute to the objective of a global ban on chemical weapons.

On behalf of the Twelve, I would like to confirm that the events of the past year have not diminished our conviction that it is through regional initiatives and efforts that tangible security benefits can become a reality for the area concerned.

The Twelve are conscious of the fact that the various regions of the world have their own particular characteristics. Individual States have security interests of their own, quite often geared towards the prevailing circumstances in their region. This is certainly not new and the Twelve have expressed such convictions before.

The adoption by consensus of resolution 45/58 M, on regional disarmament, at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly also illustrates the general resolve to stress the importance of regional disarmament and to increase international awareness of it. By the introduction, this year again, of a joint draft resolution, the Twelve want to reaffirm their commitment to this cause.

The current session of the First Committee is thus demonstrating even greater awareness of the importance of a regional approach to disarmament.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Whenever possible, the Twelve will continue to stimulate and support initiatives that lead to increased security in a region. They are convinced that the search for regional stability must be pursued in order to enhance security at the lowest possible level of military forces, curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and promoting economic and social progress.

As they stated in the general debate, the Twelve believe that the Middle East is certainly an area where regional arms-control and disarmament measures must be instituted as a matter of priority. The Twelve recall the proposals to that end put forward by President Mubarak and welcome the timely arms-control initiative that President Bush proposed for the region.

They welcome the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. It is an example of the interaction of global and regional efforts to ensure security in a particular region.

The Twelve recognize that the issue of regional disarmament is gaining support. In that context they recall the initiative taken by one of their partners aimed at regional disarmament in an area of the Balkans. They also recall the recent initiatives taken in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

One of the partners was a sponsor of, and a party to, the Estoril agreements, which established a peace process in Angola.

There is a long history of members of the Twelve taking initiatives on arms control and disarmament at both the global and the regional level. In that respect, the Twelve recall earlier initiatives by Foreign Ministers Andreotti and Genscher concerning international arms transfers.

The Twelve welcome the global arms-control initiatives put forward this year, such as President Mitterrand's global disarmament initiative, the

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related proposal on conventional-arms transfers made by Prime Minister Major, the declaration on conventional-arms transfers and the non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons made at the London economic summit of July 1991, and the joint declaration of the five permanent members of the Security Council of 18 October 1991 on arms transfers and non-proliferation. They also recall the declaration on non-proliferation and arms exports adopted by the European Council on 29 June 1991.

All those global initiatives will have an impact on, and will favourably contribute to, efforts in the field of regional disarmament.

Europe has moved from cold war to cooperation in the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and to applied security through a conventional-disarmament treaty and the adoption of confidence- and security-building measures and of the Charter for a New Europe. But the example of Europe, encouraging as it may be to other regions, is not, of course, the only model. The Twelve clearly recognized this during the debate in the Disarmament Commission this year when they concluded that

> "Initiatives should take into account particular characteristics of each region and should lead to stability and security for all the participating States. The States in the region should themselves define appropriate and specific conditions for the security of their region as well as conditions for ensuring their security in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and generally recognized principles of international law".

Armed aggression is not the means to solve disputes between States. That is the most important message from the Gulf War. More than ever in the past four decades, the international climate is propitious for finding solutions to

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

regional conflicts. Regional disarmament is a vital part of such solutions. Concrete and specific steps are called for, coming from the regions themselves but stimulated from outside the region if appropriate. The Twelve would like to pay a tribute to the increasing role the United Nations is playing in this regard. No one from outside or from inside a region should, of course, try to impose a solution on others. The only result of that would be a short-lived solution followed by more instability and conflict.

Regional disarmament is essential if progress towards global security is to be achieved; they reinforce each other. Regional disarmament is a very practical contribution to the global process. At the regional level the issues of antagonism leading to tensions and/or hostilities between States can be addressed. Security perceptions are usually felt much more keenly at the regional level. In the final analysis it is with regional tensions that the arms race is fuelled.

Accordingly, during this year's session of the Disarmament Commission, the Twelve proposed a set of guidelines and principles: elements of a regional approach to arms control and disarmament within the context of global security. They were meant as a working tool in the shape of a matrix from which States in various regions could, after careful analysis, freely draw, to their own perceived advantage, when they wished to embark on a process towards security and stability in their own region.

Regional disarmament efforts cannot stand on their own. There must also be a serious political commitment to address underlying issues which produce tension and dispute. Significantly, in that context, East-West tensions have almost disappeared. As a result, regional disarmament and regional security

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

issues are gradually but unmistakably acquiring different dimensions. For the gradual disappearance of East-West tensions is in essence also taking away the possibility, so endemic in the past, of hiding regional strife behind super-Power rivalry. The added advantage of that disappearance is, however, that the real causes of regional disputes emerge more clearly. The international community thus has a good opportunity to stimulate States in a region to address the real issues that divide them and that cause tension between them.

As stated, the Twelve believe that this year's common draft resolution on regional disarmament, including confidence-building measures, is a useful contribution to the aforementioned goal. Taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, the Twelve's draft text stresses that initiatives to improve regional security should come from States within a region and should be supported by all States concerned. One of the means to ensure the success of such a process is the full application of confidence-building measures in the fields of political, economic and military cooperation.

The Twelve's draft resolution encourages all States to envisage the establishment of regional centres for the prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflicts wherever needed. Such forums for dialogue and possibly for negotiation would facilitate the establishment of a regional disarmament regime. The Twelve recommend the draft resolution in document A/C.1/46/L.17 for consideration and support.

Mr. COLLINS (Ireland): Since this is my first formal statement in the Committee, I should like to be recorded as echoing the words of my Ambassador last week in relation to the chairmanship of the Committee and, equally, I should like to express my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee as well.

I am speaking as a sponsor - and to support - draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.4 on the subject of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. My country has long supported calls for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. The consistency and firmness with which we have done so are an indication of the strength of our conviction that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is an essential step on the road to the achievement of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons.

We recognize that a comprehensive test ban would not, in and of itself, rid the world of nuclear weapons; but, as a political signal of our determination to settle disputes by exclusively peaceful means and as a practical limitation on the development of new nuclear weapons, it would be of great importance.

We welcome the merger this year of the traditional texts on nuclear testing. The new text strives towards and reflects what we believe to be a growing consensus on the issue of a comprehensive test ban in the First Committee.

We realize that some nuclear-weapon States continue to believe that a comprehensive test ban would adversely affect their national-security interests. We understand and respect such views. In return, those States ought to accept the sincerity of our view when we say that neither complete nuclear disarmament nor a comprehensive test ban are intended to diminish the

(Mr. Collins, Ireland)

security of any State. It is our contention that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons would lead to increased security for all States.

We have seen great strides in nuclear disarmament in the past year. We welcome the new emphasis on the security and safety of nuclear weapons. We believe that this re-evaluation of the benefits of nuclear weapons must apply as much to their testing as it does to their deployment. Just as the political will to reduce nuclear weapons is growing, so also, we believe, will the acceptance of the need for a comprehensive test ban. It is not consistent, in the view of my delegation, for States to promote collective methods for assuring security based on dialogue and negotiation, on the one hand, and, on the other, to continue with the development of even more destructive nuclear weapons against the declared wishes of the overwhelming majority of the international community.

The question how to achieve a comprehensive test ban is of great interest and importance to the international community. In the draft resolution submitted by New Zealand (A/C.1/46/L.4) it is proposed that the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty should be handled by the Conference on Disarmament. From our point of view, that is a very appropriate and acceptable method. However, there may be other approaches, including interim goals and step-by-step arrangements, which could bring us to a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The benefits of doubt are legion. The following paragraph was drafted on the basis - and under the clear misapprehension - that the person occupying the Chair as it was read would be from Poland. There is a European writer called Mrozek, with whose work I would expect the Chairman to be familiar. In any event, in one of his great fables he has a dog who is behaving like a

(Mr. Collins, Ireland)

cat. Having decided to take the dog to the veterinary surgeon, the latter refuses to deal with the apparent problem. Mrozek makes the observation that "either he thought that I was mad or else reality is not so simple as it appears". I think that reality is not so simple as it appears. In that context, my delegation is ready to consider a variety of approaches towards achieving a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In the new climate of international relations, we must be no less imaginative or innovative in relation to nuclear testing than individual States have been in relation to nuclear deployments.

The question of the comprehensive test ban is inextricably linked to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. In the recent past we have seen irrefutable evidence that one State was actively pursuing a nuclear-weapons development programme. Other States are also suspected of being engaged in such programmes.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, of which no country is a stronger supporter than my own, provides an important means for preventing the development of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear States. Clearly, the safeguards required under the Treaty need to be improved to make them more effective, but the non-proliferation Treaty remains a cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, the Treaty safeguards can never be absolutely foolproof. Ultimately, the only guarantee that States will not attempt to develop nuclear weapons is an international agreement which provides solemn, binding assurances that States will refrain from testing and developing nuclear weapons for ever.

This draft resolution, of which my country is a sponsor, should therefore be seen, not as an anti-nuclear resolution, but as a resolution in favour of

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the non-proliferation Treaty. At a time when the recognition of the dangers posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons is greater than ever before and when the resolution of the international community to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime is stronger than ever before, we believe that the continued absence of consensus on this draft resolution sends a fundamentally wrong signal about the firmness of our collective will to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. In this context we urge all the nuclear Powers to follow the lead given by President Gorbachev in his recent announcement of a one-year moratorium on nuclear testing. That would be an important step towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban. We also urge all delegations to support the draft resolution to demonstrate in a clear and unambiguous way our shared commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to make further significant progress towards the achievement of real peace and security for all States.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): On behalf of the European Community and its member States, I should like to make some comments on draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18, "Transparency in armaments", which is jointly sponsored by the Twelve and Japan, and which is introduced under agenda item 60 (b), "International arms transfers".

First, let me briefly mention some premises that should guide us in our thinking on this subject. States have the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against them. This right is universally recognized and enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The international community regards arms transfers in accordance with this right to be legitimate.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

On the other hand, States Members of the United Nations have undertaken to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion of their human and economic resources for armaments. Undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments is the fundamental principle lying at the root of those premises.

The accumulation of arms becomes an issue of concern to neighbouring countries, to a region or to the world community as a whole whenever the number and/or the quality of arms accumulated results in a threat to peace. Many arms transfers are carried out in secrecy. Thus, the total amounts of weapons acquired by one country may become generally known only too late. Should such weapons be used, the consequences would be borne not only by the States directly involved but by the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

The absence of openness and transparency can lead to misperceptions and miscalculations and thus to a climate of tension or to an unfounded arms race.

The example of the Gulf War should remain with us. In areas of tension especially, no single country should strive for levels of armaments which no longer bear any relationship to its self-defence needs. Unfortunately, this is still happening in a number of regions, especially in the Middle East.

Arms transfers are an integral component of arms procurement by States. They are often almost the only way in which States which do not maintain research, development and production across the whole range of weapons required for their armed forces can procure arms.

The international community emphasized the aspect of arms transfers in resolution 43/75 I of 7 December 1988, which recognized, amongst other things, the potential effects of arms transfers in areas where tension and regional conflict threaten international peace and security.

The urgent need to take action is now recognized by the international community. The Twelve recognize that the problem of the accumulation of armaments has many aspects, including procurement, holdings and transfers. All of these aspects need to be addressed if a comprehensive approach is to be followed. The primary objective in all cases should be increased openness and transparency.

The Twelve believe that it is necessary to deter destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms by non-discriminatory measures.

Transparency and openness can also promote restraint in arms transfers, as is clearly pointed out in the Secretary-General's excellent report, "Study

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on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" (A/46/301).

The Twelve would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General and the members of his study group wholeheartedly on their efforts, which so clearly show us how to proceed further.

The Twelve feel there is a window of opportunity today which the international community should not miss. They are encouraged by the widespread and growing acceptance of confidence-building measures as an important means to ease tensions and to facilitate disarmament agreements.

The Twelve recognize that the United Nations is especially suited to coordinating and streamlining global efforts to increase transparency in military matters. The United Nations has already established a voluntary standardized reporting system on military expenditures. Information on arms transfers would be a major complement to this effort to promote greater transparency in military affairs. It would constitute a valuable contribution to the role, effectiveness and ability of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

The Twelve therefore fully endorse the conclusions and recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, notably that:

> "A universal and non-discriminatory arms transfer register under the auspices of the United Nations should be established as soon as possible." (A/46/301, para. 161 (c))

The report also recommends:

> "The register should be so designed as to permit its prompt implementation". (ibid, para 161 (c) (i))

Another specific recommendation is:

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"The register set up should have a potential to expand to more comprehensive coverage, if required." (ibid, para 161 (c) (v))

The Twelve have been inspired by these recommendations.

On behalf of the European Community and its member States, and on behalf of Japan, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

The basic elements underlying the proposals in the draft resolution are: first, the clear responsibility of the international community to deal with the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms; secondly, the recognition that there are different, interrelated aspects of the problem - arms transfers, the illicit arms trade, military holdings and procurements; thirdly, the commitment of the international community to increase transparency in all aspects of the question; and, fourthly, the fact that the issue of international arms transfers is ready for immediate action.

These elements have led us to propose a twin-track approach: the establishment of a universal and non-discriminatory register of international conventional arms transfers now, as a first step, a register that should be capable of prompt implementation, and would then be a real contribution to transparency in conventional arms transfers; and the initiation of further steps to deal with measures of transparency in the other interrelated aspects - namely, military holdings, procurements, military doctrines and the illicit arms trade.

The draft resolution contains many changes compared with the informal draft circulated by the Twelve and Japan on 15 October. Most of these changes are the result of intensive consultations that the Twelve and Japan carried

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out with other members of the First Committee. In our view, the draft now contains a fair and balanced approach to the issue of transparency in armaments.

In the course of the past few weeks we have received overwhelming support for the objective of our initiative, that of promoting transparency in armaments. I dare say that on the objective there is a consensus within this room. Not a single delegation has spoken out against greater transparency in armaments.

The Twelve and Japan felt that the time was ripe to come forward with the draft resolution, but this does not preclude continuation of the dialogue. All delegations can see for themselves in the draft resolution that the Twelve and Japan have come a long way to meet the concerns expressed in the First Committee.

As I have said, we believe the result reflected in the draft resolution is fair and balanced. More than before, the draft focuses on the interrelated aspects of transparency in armaments. Consequently the title of the draft resolution now reads "Transparency in armaments" instead of "International arms transfers".

Greater transparency in transfers is one element - an important one - but there are broader aspects of the subject of transparency in armaments. The draft resolution explicitly acknowledges this fact.

The current draft resolution is action-oriented and deals comprehensively with the issue of the broader context of transparency in armaments. It calls for the establishment by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session of a

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register of international arms transfers. In addition, it decides to identify and examine universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in the other interrelated aspects of the question of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms - in particular, military procurements and holdings. The Twelve and Japan propose that the Conference on Disarmament be mandated to address this question.

The establishment of a register of conventional arms transfers would be a major political feature to help with multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. The Twelve therefore venture to express the hope that the draft resolution will have broad support, and that many delegations will sponsor it.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): I feel very privileged to be introducing, together with the member States of the European Community, draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

One of the lessons to be derived from the tragic events in the Gulf is that the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms by one country through international transfers contributes to aggressive behaviour when such actions are tied to that country's political aims. Thus, the most urgent issue in today's world is that of strengthening efforts to deal with problems related to the spread of arms, be they conventional or not.

With respect to international transfers of conventional weapons, it is of the utmost importance to establish an environment that encourages the maximum number of nations to exercise a judicious approach in their arms exports and imports. In this vein, Japan since March of this year has advocated the establishment of a United Nations reporting system on arms transfers. I referred to the initiative the Japanese Prime Minister took on this subject in my statement during the general debate in this Committee. The absence of reliable data on the arms trade is a factor that breeds distrust among nations. On the other hand, enhanced levels of transparency in international arms transfers can contribute to restraint in arms exports and imports.

In preparing the draft resolution, Japan, together with the member States of the European Community, has been consulting intensively with a number of countries interested in this subject and has made considerable efforts to reflect, as far as possible, the views expressed by those countries.

This has indeed been a valuable and enriching process. For example, aspects of the arms build-up other than arms transfers - such as military procurement and holdings, for example - are now to be dealt with in the draft

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resolution, calling for various actions by the international community. The language with respect to the illicit arms trade has also been strengthened. The question of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, an issue which demands a different kind of approach, is now referred to in our draft text. In sum, the resulting enriched text, while clearly recognizing the comprehensiveness of the issue of the accumulation of arms, has set out specific and parallel approaches to different components of the question.

Naturally, we are prepared to continue our consultations with delegations having an interest in this question, and we will spare no effort to explain our position in detail. My delegation sincerely hopes that the draft resolution will receive active and overwhelming support from all member States of the Committee.

The adoption of the draft resolution itself is not our major aim; nor is the establishment of the arms-transfer register itself. Promotion of transparency in military matters as a whole, including in arms transfers, is of greater importance. What we intend to achieve by submitting this draft resolution is to set in motion an evolutionary process leading to greater transparency in military matters. The establishment of an arms-transfer register, though some delegations may find that the mechanism proposed in our draft resolution does not go far enough, will mark a very significant first step in the right direction. Mr. McDonald, Chairman of the Group of Experts on this issue, has made similar remarks.

In view of the universal interest expressed on this subject, discussion of the issue of arms transfers within a small circle of major arms suppliers alone will not be sufficient. Rather, the subject should also be addressed at the United Nations.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

The expectations of the international community for a revitalized, action-oriented United Nations have never been so high since the establishment of the Organization. We believe that the First Committee cannot afford to fall short of those expectations. Therefore, my delegation asks all the members of this Committee for understanding and for support for our draft resolution.

Ms. MASON (Canada): Canada too wishes now to make a statement under item 60 (b), and with reference to draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18, just introduced by the European Community and Japan.

On 8 February of this year, in the midst of the Gulf war, Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada launched an ambitious programme of action, outlining measures to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and excessive build-ups of conventional arms. One of the principal components of that programme was the call for transparency in international arms sales, particularly through the establishment of a United Nations register. Canada was delighted to see that other world leaders subsequently supported the concept and that the United Nations group of governmental experts concluded a consensus report including the recommendation that a register be established "as soon as possible".

In my opening statement to this Committee, I outlined Canadian views on the establishment of a United Nations register. Such a register must provide for the fullest transparency possible and should provide the best possible basis for international consultation leading to constraint in situations where that is necessary. Ideally, for it to fulfil completely its confidence-building potential, the register should be broadly supported, with the participation of both suppliers and recipients. Canada continues to

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

believe that the register must be non-discriminatory to those who rely on imports to meet their defence needs, and therefore regards it as essential that domestic arms procurement and inventories be included in the register at an early stage. But most important, we must take the first significant steps in the establishment of the register now. Delay will be inexcusable, and indeed will not be excused by the international community.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

Over recent weeks Canada has consulted with a wide range of United Nations Members, including numerous delegations in this room, on the subject of the register. We are most encouraged by the broad support evident for the establishment of such a system. While there are some differences of approach evident among States, we believe that there exists a broad area of common ground that provides the basis upon which we can build.

Among the States with which Canada has consulted are members of the European Community and Japan. Canada commends the efforts by those States in preparing and submitting draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18, which to a great extent meets the conditions that Canada has long asserted are essential for the early establishment of an effective register. Canada views the draft resolution as an excellent focus for our further deliberations, deliberations that must be successful.

Canada also applauds the constructive approach of other delegations that have been active in discussions on this issue. Their input has been valuable, and their support is crucial to the establishment of an effective register.

Canada regards the establishment of an effective United Nations register on armaments as a major priority. At this session the First Committee must make a tangible and valuable contribution to our broader goals of disarmament and international peace and security. My delegation is committed to making every effort to ensure that this opportunity is seized. Canada looks forward to working closely with all interested delegations to that end.

I might also note that Canada will want to make further comments later at an appropriate time on the draft resolution submitted by Colombia and Peru (A/C.1/46/L.23), which deals with the issue of illicit arms transfers and which Canada sees as an important and entirely complementary initiative to that reflected in draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.18.

Mr. NEGROTTO CAMBIASO (Italy): Since this is my first statement in the First Committee, I should like to express my congratulations to the Chairman on his election to preside over the Committee, as well as to the other officers of the Committee.

The representative of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, has just introducted to the First Committee the draft resolution on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/46/L.18). He has also clearly and eloquently expressed the reasons and concerns that have motivated the Twelve in taking this initiative.

I shall not, therefore, repeat what has already been stated. Since 1978, the date of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Government of Italy has been actively involved in supporting progress on the subject of transparency in armaments in many international forums, universal or regional, particularly through the initiatives of the Prime Minister, Mr. Andreotti, aimed at establishing an international monitoring system on arms transfers. General Assembly resolution 43/75 I, which was introduced at the initiative of Colombia in close cooperation with Italy and actively sponsored by many countries, was a first result and an important point of reference.

As a sign of support for international cooperation on the matter the Government of Italy organized, under the auspices of the United Nations, a symposium on "transparency in international arms transfers", which was held at Florence in April 1990. Many of the recommendations made by the experts in the excellent and complete report of the Secretary-General had been usefully developed at Florence and published in Topical Papers 3, which contains some of the statements made on that occasion.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

The draft resolution now submitted by the Twelve and Japan, enriched by the contributions of ideas by many countries, envisages, inter alia, the establishment of a mechanism for technical implementation of the register and a process for a wider examination of the phenomenon of arms accumulation in all its aspects.

The same draft resolution, in one of its operative paragraphs, recommends the organization of meetings similar to the one held at Florence in April 1990. I should like to announce the availability of the Italian Government to consider organizing and hosting - again in Italy, under the auspices of the United Nations and in a time-frame to be determined - a symposium aimed at informally focusing on the problem of transparency in armaments on the basis of the preliminary experience acquired on the subject. We are convinced, in fact, that in a further stage a new occasion to exchange ideas informally could usefully complement our endeavours. To this end, we will remain in close consultation with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): I am pleased this morning to be able to make some joint observations on behalf of New Zealand and Australia about the draft resolution on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/46/L.18), which has just been submitted to the Committee by the Ambassador of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Community and Japan. From the perspective of two Asia-Pacific countries, Australia and New Zealand, I wish to commend the efforts of the European Community and Japan, which have sought to take forward the recommendations of the study compiled by a United Nations-appointed group of experts.

In this regard I wish to associate Australia and New Zealand fully with the comments that have just been made by Ambassador Peggy Mason of Canada.

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

Ambassador Mason has already been playing a very helpful role behind the scenes in seeking to bridge the differences that exist in the Committee on the way the register and its associated ideas should be implemented. We are in her debt for the role that Canada and other concerned countries are seeking to play in reconciling various possibilities. Our objective is to agree this year on the implementation of a register that is practical, broad in its scope and sufficiently extensive in what it represents by way of political commitment to draw in all countries represented here and to be able to be adopted by consensus.

Australia and New Zealand wish to record their admiration for the study carried out by the Group of Experts and the professional way in which that work was carried out. Australia had a participant in that Group. Like others who participated, we believe that the effort initiated by the Secretary-General has been productive and deserves to be treated seriously and with respect. Australia and New Zealand therefore want to see the recommendations of the Group of Experts adopted and implemented without delay.

As was made clear in the statements made earlier this morning, this is a draft resolution presented by the European Community and Japan. It is obvious, therefore, that Australia and New Zealand have not been among the parties principal to the evolution of the draft resolution. This is not to say that we do not have interests in the matters covered by the draft resolution. We are, of course, committed to the product of the Expert Group's study, but in the diplomacy that has taken place in the period before the First Committee and here in New York, the principal carriage has been by others.

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

Nevertheless, I wish to make clear that New Zealand and Australia believe that this session of the United Nations General Assembly presents the first opportunity for the international community to move forward in the way it handles transparency in conventional armaments. A register of conventional arms transfers is an integral part of that. As we pursue this objective, we should ensure that the issue of conventional arms transfers is kept clearly separate from the expression of our views on nuclear arms and other armaments of mass destruction.

Turning then to the substance of the draft resolution which has been introduced this morning, I wish to make clear that it is the view of both New Zealand and Australia that we should not delay any further in implementing the clear recommendations set forth in the experts' study. In particular, we believe that we should take a prompt and unambiguous decision that a register of conventional arms transfers should be set up by the General Assembly at this session, and that its implementation should commence from an early date.

Equally, many nations are inclined to the view that the scope of the activities under this draft resolution should not be limited to arms transfers alone. We would support further exploration of the idea that stockholdings and procurements of domestically acquired weapons should also be incorporated in the register as it is established and progressively implemented. Indeed, in the longer term, the viability and success of the register may be dependent on its extension into such areas. In our view, however, the most important priority for this session is to secure an unambiguous political commitment about the scope and the operation of such a register which is acceptable to the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

It follows from this logic that Australia and New Zealand also see considerable benefit in the parallel resolution sponsored by Colombia and Peru (A/C.1/46/L.23), which deals with the issue of illicit transfers of arms. We see great merit in having a consensus resolution establishing a conventional arms register paralleled by one dealing with illicit transfers of arms.

In view of the foregoing policy concerns and approaches by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, it will be readily apparent that we are firmly in favour of early substantive progress on this issue. It is a matter of some concern that so straightforward a question does not seem, at least up until now, to have attracted the consensus support which we hoped for and which we had anticipated. Perhaps it is in the nature of discussions at the United Nations that a certain amount of negotiation is needed before all participants feel comfortable with a final agreed product. We believe the time has come to leave aside existing differences. We need to take some decisions in principle which correspond to the shared political commitment reflected in the statements of many government leaders from all geographical groups and from all political persuasions. It would be a sad commentary on the new environment in which we now work if, in 1991, the international community was unable to take a basic decision agreeing to a register of transfers of conventional arms.

Australia and New Zealand believe that the opportunity is before us to take such a decision without ambiguity and without delay. We endorse and will support all the efforts to reach a consensus resolution this year.

Mr. AALBU (Norway): Let me at the outset stress that my delegation welcomes the excellent report of the Group of Experts on the Study on Ways and

(Mr. Aalbu, Norway)

Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms (A/46/301). My delegation supports the recommendations presented by the Group of Experts.

The study has served as a valuable basis for the deliberations leading up to the draft resolution entitled "Transparency in armaments" contained in document A/C.1/46/L.18. Most States depend on arms imports to assure a reasonable level of security.

As stated by previous speakers, the inherent right of self-defence, recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, implies that States also have a right to acquire the arms with which to defend themselves. At the same time, an excessive accumulation of arms may have negative consequences for regional and international stability and for sustainable development. The Gulf War showed the way in which peace and stability can be undermined when a country is able to acquire a massive arsenal of weaponry that goes far beyond the needs for self-defence and threatens its neighbours.

Several initiatives have been launched during the past few years providing for more openness and transparency in the world-wide arms trade. In this regard Norway supports the proposal by the European Community and Japan for the establishment of a universal register of arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations as of 1 January 1992.

Such a register would promote greater openness and transparency in international arms transfers and help to discourage destabilizing sales. My delegation shares the view that the promotion of transparency in the international transfers of conventional arms is not a goal in itself. However, transparency is one essential element in the wider context of confidence-building measures, arms limitation and disarmament. In our view,

(Mr. Aalbu, Norway)

is a good idea to establish a panel of qualified experts to elaborate the necessary technical procedures for the operation of a register, in particular the establishment of a standardized format for the reporting by Member States.

One of the major prerequisites to guaranteeing the effective functioning of the register is universal participation in the reporting system. The Conference on Disarmament is an important forum in which to deal with the question of increasing openness and transparency in interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. The Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is well suited to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field, as spelled out in the draft resolution.

Norway will support all efforts to achieve a consensus resolution on this subject this year.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.